Stroud u3a November newsletter

LEARN, LAUGH, LIVE

Welcome to all those who have recently joined Stroud and District u3a. You are very welcome and we look forward to meeting you soon.

If you need any assistance, please contact Dilys Warren.

Our website is full of information, including all the Groups we do. You can access it at https://stroud.u3asite.uk

This newsletter

After five years of being your news editor I have handed over the baton to Liz Ponting. I've had fun collecting news stories and corresponding with many of you; I hope you've enjoyed the monthly output.

But you haven't quite seen the last of me. For a few months I'll still send out the emails and reminders, But if you contact me about a story, I'll pass your message on to Liz who will deal with it. **PETER FURTADO**

Note from new Editor:

Thank you Peter for not only being the Stroud u3a Newsletter Editor for the past five years, but for all the wonderful support that you are continuing to give me as I take on the role. I can only hope I do half as well as you did in the position. **LIZ PONTING**

Dates for your diary

20 NOVEMBER: Publication of November Newsletter

24 NOVEMBER; Coffee Morning, 10:30am–12:00pm The Old Nelson (now with new owners), Stratford Road, Stroud

03 DECEMBER Christmas Lunch 12:15 for 12:30**,** The Old Nelson, Stratford Road, Stroud

The Christmas menu is attached to this newsletter

Booking is essential: Contact Sylvia Pearse (01453 827597)**. Food choices and payment must be received by 25 November.**

08 DECEMBER Deadline for submission of articles to December's newsletter. This is earlier this month as I'll be away. **Can all Groups** please send in a paragraph or two and photo/s if possible of what they are currently doing or intend to do in the near future and whether there is availability to Liz Ponting. I may not have space to put the info into the next Newsletter, but it will go in soon after.

January 7th: 2.30-4pm Lansdown Hall. "Wildlife in your garden", talk by David Cramp

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Due to the Christmas lunch, there is no Lansdown Talk in December. If you are interested in being a speaker at a future event, please contact our Speaker Secretary.

Lost property at Lansdown hall

There was a hat lost after the AGM on Thursday 12 November. If anyone picked it up in error, please let me know and I'll get it to the correct person: Liz Ponting.

Richard did go back and look for it, but unfortunately it wasn't found. The administrator at Lansdown Hall can be contacted at info@lansdownhall.org re anything left behind at Lansdown Hall.

Katherine Kirk meets Simon Opher MP

Simon, who is also a GP, is a great advocate for people of all ages to become fit and healthy by keeping active and socialising. Katherine went to see Simon a few days ago. to tell him more about Stroud u3a and how we do just that by enabling our members to take part in a range of activities, enabling exercise, learning and socialising. He was very enthusiastic. and I'm sure will encourage people in Stroud to join us.

Website and Webmaster role

We need someone to help out, with the intention of taking on the role of Stroud u3a Webmaster and Website Manager from Richard Bedford.

The aim will be to effect a smooth transition during the coming 6-9 months.

The Stroud u3a website is built on the national u3a Siteworks platform which is in turn based on Wordpress. So, good general IT skills and familiarity with Wordpress would be really helpful - but it's not that hard to learn the latter.

If you can help, please contact Richard to find out more.

This role would also involve being part of the Stroud u3a Communication working group and, ideally but not essentially, being on the Stroud u3a Committee who have overall responsibility for the website.

One of the advantages of the Siteworks platform is that there is a huge amount of training and support available for u3a webmasters including a network of others who perform the same function in other u3as.

Historical re-enactment following the AGM

Following the business part of our AGM and an interval for mulled wine and mince pies, Jenny Dunford, one of our members, gave us a talk, with slides, about the organisation of Historic Reenactments, the period covered was the English Civil War. The following testimonial sums up the interest created.

"I didn't think the Historic Re-enactment would be particularly interesting for me but I hung on her every word (almost!) as she made the subject so interesting. I thought it was a great idea to use retired police horses for their chargers as they are used to all sorts of noises. I'm sure the horses enjoyed it too."

With her husband Steve they also brought along a display of items from the period.

Stroud Christmas Tree Festival

We will be displaying a Christmas tree again in this year's popular Festival at St Laurence Church, which has the theme of 'Heritage' and entry is free but donations are welcome. It will be open between 10am and 5pm (vary at weekends) and music events will be happening during the day.

This will be another opportunity to display u3a leaflets to promote our great organisation and it will be interesting to see how the numerous charities will display the theme.

Events Co-ordinator Dilys Warren is asking for volunteers to offer an hour to help out during the Festival so if you are available please contact her on the 'Events' contact email on the u3a website or on dilyswarren@aol.com.

Lansdown Talk

January 7th: 2.30pm: David Cramp "Wildlife in the Garden"

David Cramp is hoping to share with you his keen interest in natural history and particularly in birds, which he gained from an early age.

He has taken an active role in undertaking bird surveys for the RSPB, the British Trust for Ornithology and the Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society.

David served on the RSPB Council for 5 years until 2018, as well as on the RSPB's Gloucestershire Local Group's committee for over 30 years, including 23 years as Leader.

Over the years, David has given almost 600 talks with local organisations and societies in Gloucestershire and neighbouring counties, with all the fees received given to support the work of the RSPB.

An Irish Jaunt

Cam & Dursely u3a are organising a seven-night trip to Ireland. Dublin and Galway in October 2027. It includes two overnights in Dublin area, Dublin and Galway city tours, Connemara National Park, Lakeland's of Ireland, free day in Galway. Travel by ferry and coach. Price £899 per person, or £1099 for single-person occupancy. For details, contact Sandie Foster, phone 07780 739284 or sandie.foster@gmail.com

Getting to know you – Liz Ponting

I spent my first 23 years in Aberdeen, Scotland then moved to Stroud and spent the next 32 years there. After that I returned to Aberdeen for another five years and have been back in Gloucestershire, living in Eastington for the past five years.

I have four children, two boys and two girls, who currently all live locally, and five grandchildren, two boys and three girls, so a wonderful mix

1. How long have you lived in Stroud?

I live just outside Stroud, in Eastington, and love it there. It is close to the M5, and therefore close to Bristol, Gloucester, and anywhere else that I need to get to.

2. What was your most enjoyable job before retirement?

I am not fully retired and am currently working Part-Time in a Chandlery and also teach piano, which I've done for many years. I thoroughly enjoy teaching and get quite a thrill from seeing how my pupils progress. I have taught from age four to age 85.

3. What is your dream holiday activity?

I enjoy both City Breaks and holidays in the sun, but I prefer a pool to the beach, but appreciate being near the beach for the scenery. This year I've been to Berlin in February where it was extremely cold, Frankfurt and Nurnberg in June where it was completely the opposite and was extremely hot and am going to Spain in next month, where I'm hoping it will be much hotter than I expect December to be in Gloucestershire.

4. What is your favourite piece of music?

I find it difficult to chose favourites and recently saw Luke Combes live in Wembley and enjoyed his music and earlier in the year I saw Harry Styles, and he gives a really good concert, but I also really enjoy classical music and other styles. What I like best tends to depend on my mood at the moment.

5. Do you play or enjoy any sports? Which?

I'm not a great sports fan, except watching my grandsons play Rugby and Football.

6. When were/are the best days of your life?

All times have been enjoyable, just different.

7. What is the next exciting thing you are planning?

Visiting a friend in Spain next month.

GROUPS

Creative writing group

IS IT TIME TO REVEAL THE CREATIVE GENIUS YOU'VE BEEN HIDING? WHY NOT JOIN A NEW u3a CREATIVE WRITING GROUP?

We are opening a new Writing Group, meeting in a member's home near **Nailsworth** town centre. Up to eight writers will meet on the **second Tuesday of each month**, from **10am until midday**.

Everyone will be invited to read a contribution of up to 1,500 words on a topic of their own choice (fiction or non-fiction), and we welcome poetry. There is no formal tuition: we compare and contrast our efforts, whilst allowing time for coffee and conversation.

If you're ready to become an author, please contact Robert Smith, (Writing Group Coordinator) by clicking my name, or phone 01666 502654 or 07848 829780

Drama group

The u3a Drama group, The Lewiston Players, worked very hard over many months on our recent production of "Arsenic and Old Lace" by Joseph Kesselring. The actors rose to the challenge of performing this three-act farce with excellent characterisation and enthusiasm.

Some of our actors had previous experience of performance and brought professionalism and talent and some had never acted before but did very well.

We gave two public performances which were very well attended. The profits from ticket sales etc have been donated to Stroud and District Foodbank.

Click on the arrows below the photograph to see more from the first day.

If anyone reading this would like to join our Drama group when we embark upon our next project then please contact me on the Groups site.

Sheila Beer, Group Coordinator.

Knitting Together group

The Knitting Together Group will start on Wednesday 20 January 2027, 12 Noon - 4:00 pm, Brimscome. Address on application.

Future sessions will be discussed at the Group with dates arranged to suit the majority.

Please contact Denise Hawkins for dates each month.

Holiday and Travel group

Have you ever wondered about joining an exciting holiday tour but are unsure about doing so on your own or with a friend or partner? If so, this idea came up at a recent u3a meeting and a number of people were interested.

Might it be a special u3a tour organised by an experienced travel agency? Or just a friendly face looking to join a guided tour?

If you are interested you are most welcome to come along to a meeting to share hopes and dreams and possibilities.

The first meeting will be on Wednesday 2 December at 2.30pm

In the first instance please click here to contact Sandie Foster who will also happily chat to you on 07780 739284.

Art appreciation group - August Macke

On October 21st Ann presented us with a “Promise Unfulfilled” – the story of August Macke whose promising artistic career was cut short by the First World War

August Robert Ludwig Macke was one of the most gifted and influential painters of German Expressionism. Although he died at just 27, he left behind a remarkable body of work characterised by brilliant colour, lyrical beauty and an infectious sense of optimism.

Macke studied art in Düsseldorf before moving to Berlin and later Bonn. He was deeply interested in the new artistic movements sweeping across Europe, particularly Impressionism, Fauvism and

the emerging language of Expressionism. His travels to Paris introduced him to the work of French artists, especially Henri Matisse, whose bold use of colour had a lasting influence on his painting.

Macke became closely associated with Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider), an influential group of avant-garde artists founded in Munich in 1911 by Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc. The group sought to move beyond traditional representation, using colour, shape and imagination to express emotion and spiritual ideas. Macke's contribution, however, was distinctive: unlike some of his contemporaries, he generally preferred scenes of everyday life to abstract or dramatic subjects.

His paintings frequently depict elegant figures strolling in parks, women in shop windows, children, gardens and busy urban streets. He had an exceptional ability to transform ordinary moments into something joyful and harmonious. His use of luminous blues, greens, yellows and reds gives his paintings an almost dreamlike quality. Among his best-known works are *The Large Bright Shop Window* (1912), *Couple at Garden Table* (1914).

In 1914, Macke travelled to Tunisia with fellow artists Paul Klee and Louis Moilliet. The brilliant North African light and vibrant colours of the landscape profoundly influenced him. During this journey he produced a series of watercolours and paintings that are often considered among his finest achievements. The experience encouraged an even greater freedom and confidence in his use of colour.

Sadly, the outbreak of the First World War brought his artistic journey to an abrupt end. Macke was conscripted into the German army and was killed in action in September 1914, near Perthes-lès-Hurlus in France, aged just 27.

Contacts

Katherine Kirk chairk@stroudu3a.org.uk 07977 597979

Richard Bedford secretary@stroudu3a.org.uk

Sylvia Pearse treasurer@stroudu3a.org.uk and membership@stroudu3a.org.uk 01453 827597

Sandie Foster speaker@stroudu3a.org.uk 07780 739284

Elizabeth Hutton groups@stroudu3a.org.uk

Liz Ponting news@stroudu3a.org.uk 07910 016565

Joan Toon assets@stroudu3a.org.uk

Dilys Warren vice-chair@stroudu3a.org.uk and newmembers@stroud.org.uk 01453 751870